



# Environmental Bulletin

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*from the Savannah River Site*

## The CAB provides comment on cleanup strategies

The SRS CAB at the May 19 meeting provided comments on the National and SRS "Accelerating Cleanup: Paths to Closure" strategy documents. The CAB is disappointed that the documents are neither planning or budget related and suggest they be better linked to the Federal Facility Agreement at SRS. Fifteen specific comments addressed various aspects of the documents including the lack of contingency costs and plans; the need to include facility deactivation costs; descriptions of end states; and impacts of restoration activities on ecological habitats.

The Board adopted a recommendation on SRS Integrator Operable Units (IOU's) agreeing to support this approach to environmental remediation if it is used to

ensure protection of human health and the environment and can reduce the time to initiate remedial actions. IOUs are the primary hydrologic pathways of contaminant migration from SRS. Workplans are developed for the seven IOUs at SRS to evaluate existing data and determine if any early, interim or final remedial actions are needed. The CAB requested that DOE, EPA and SCDHEC present a consensus position on the benefit of performing IOUs and justify the cost of the program.

The SRS CAB also endorsed the selection of the proposed alternative for D Area Oil Seepage Basin cleanup including natural attenuation and groundwater mixing zone with institutional controls.

## Public meeting on External Regulation Pilot Program

Since 1994, DOE has been examining possible external regulation of existing DOE facilities. Two advisory groups recommended that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) be considered as the external regulator. In June 1997, DOE and NRC agreed to evaluate NRC oversight of certain DOE facilities on a pilot program basis. The Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuel (RBOF) at SRS has been chosen as one of three facilities under the pilot program.

The Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will hold a joint public meeting to provide information on this pilot project on June 25, 6:30 p.m., City of Aiken Conference Center, City Municipal Building, 215 The Alley, Aiken. The major areas of discussion at this meeting will be:

- The Overall Pilot Program and background information
- The SRS Work Plan
- Major issues affecting NRC oversight (generic and site-specific)

A number of background documents pertaining to the issue of NRC oversight of certain DOE facilities are available. You may obtain copies of the documents by contacting Jim Giusti at (803) 725-2889 or from the joint DOE/NRC Web Site at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/NMSS/doepilot.html>.

## SRS works to protect, improve environment as part of the Strategic Plan

One of the major goals in the SRS Strategic Plan is to demonstrate excellence in environmental stewardship. As part of this commitment SRS will continue management of legacy materials, excess facilities and waste stabilization. Remediation of waste sites and waste treatment will continue, as will protection and management of natural resources.

For example, the site has completed or will:

- Meet milestones identified in the approved Phased Canyon Strategy.
- Complete the Nuclear Material Processing Needs Assessment.

- Begin plutonium storage in the Actinide Packaging and Storage Facility.

- Begin operation of Transfer and Storage Facility for spent nuclear fuel.

- Remove six high-level-waste tanks from service.

- Remediate 211 of 467 waste sites.

- Complete the transuranic drum retrieval project.

- Implement the revised red-cockaded woodpecker recovery plan.

- Treat and dispose of 8500 cubic meters of low-level waste.

- Maintain 100 percent compliance with all environmental regulations, including permits and negotiated agreements.

# Record of Decision Issued for K-Area Bingham Pump Outage Pit

The Department of Energy (DOE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) have selected the remedial approach for Savannah River Site's (SRS) K-Area Bingham Pump Outage Pit (KBPOP) operable unit. The remedial decision is documented in the record of decision document. This document includes a responsiveness summary which addresses public comments made during the previously held public comment period. The DOE has worked with SCDHEC and EPA to ensure the remedial approach is consistent with all applicable environmental requirements.

The DOE, EPA, and SCDHEC have determined that remedial action is necessary for this unit. The preferred remedial action is to impose institutional controls. Institutional controls meet the remedial action objectives for the KBPOP operable unit by precluding future onsite residential use of the area, buried waste contact, removal, or excavation.

The solution is intended to be permanent and effective in both the long and near terms.

## The Record of Decision for the KBPOP unit is available at these locations:

- DOE Public Reading Room at the Gregg-Graniteville Library at the University of South Carolina-Aiken campus in Aiken, SC;
- Thomas Cooper Library Government Documents Department at USC in Columbia, SC;
- Reese Library at Augusta State University in Augusta, GA; and
- Asa H. Gordon Library at Savannah State University in Savannah, GA.

*The Environmental Bulletin has a new look. Expect the same information on federal regulations, but also look for more exciting articles relating to the environmental efforts happening at the Savannah River Site.*

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## for more information...

The Record of Decision is also available on the Internet in the SRS Home Page under "Happening Now", (<http://www.srs.gov>) and on the SRS Environmental Restoration Home Page, (<http://www.srs.gov/general/srenviro/erd/pub/pubinv.html>).

For additional information contact:

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## Need NEPA documents?

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E-mail: [nepa@srs.gov](mailto:nepa@srs.gov)

Fax/Phone: 1 (800) 881-7292

## A fact sheet regarding the consumption of fish caught in the Savannah River is available from:

South Carolina Department of Health and  
Environmental Control  
(888)849-7241 (toll free)  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources:  
(706) 369-6376 or  
(404) 656-4713  
Environmental Protection Agency-Region IV:  
(800) 241-1754.

# Current NEPA actions affecting SRS

• **Rocky Flats Plutonium Residues and Scrub Alloy (DOE/EIS-0277)**, The public comment period ended January 5, 1998. Comments are being resolved and will be incorporated in the final EIS which is expected to be issued second quarter, 1998.

• **Accelerator for Production of Tritium (DOE/EIS-0270)**, The comment period ended February 2, 1998. Final EIS and ROD are projected for July and August 1998, respectively.

• **Tritium Extraction Facility (DOE/EIS-0271)**, The draft EIS EPA NOA appeared in the Federal Register May 8, 1987 (63 FR 25475). The public hearing is scheduled for June 9, 1998. The comment period will close June 22, 1998.

• **DOE Waste Management (DOE/EIS-0200)**, Multiple RODs will be issued. The TRU ROD was issued January 23, 1998 (63 FR 3629). Planned

RODs are HWL Treatment, mid 1998, HLW storage, fall 1998, LLW/LLMW, end 1998.

• **SRS Spent Nuclear Fuel (DOE/EIS-0279)**, The draft EIS is scheduled to be published in July 1998.

• **Surplus Plutonium Disposition (DOE/EIS-0282)**, The draft EIS is scheduled to be issued June 1998.

• **Wetland Mitigation Bank Program (DOE/EA-1205)**, Preparation of the draft EA is progressing with a proposed issue date of third quarter 1998.

• **A-01 Outfall Constructed Wetland Project (DOE/EA-1246)**, The predecisional draft EA was sent to S.C. and Ga. for review and comment on March 18, 1998. A decision (FONSI or EIS) is expected June 1998.

## INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

\* DOE Public Reading Room, Gregg-Graniteville Library, USC-Aiken, Aiken, S.C. \* Thomas Cooper Library Government Documents Department, USC-Columbia, Columbia, S.C. \* Reese Library, Augusta State University, Augusta, Ga. \* Asa H. Gordon Library, Savannah State University, Savannah, Ga.

## INTERNET ACCESS

**SRS Home Page,**  
<http://www.srs.gov>

# Nature put to good use at the Savannah River Site

By Candace Berry, WSRC-ERD

The site's environmental restoration team installed the world's first GeoSiphon cell for the treatment of solvent-contaminated groundwater at the TNX facility. This new technology was the star of the recent Department of Energy – SRS-sponsored Groundwater Technology End User Conference, sparking interest from environmental professionals across the DOE and within the Department of Defense.

A passive groundwater remediation technology, the GeoSiphon cell was developed by the Savannah River Technology Center, and is best suited for

treatment of shallow (maximum practical lift of 25 ft.) groundwater contamination. The cell minimizes operating and maintenance costs associated with pump and treat systems, and accelerates cleanup compared to alternative funnel and gate and continuous permeable wall treatment systems.

The GeoSiphon cell is essentially a large diameter well that can be packed with treatment material such as granular cast iron, activated carbon, cation exchange resin, or zeolite. The treatment medium used at TNX is granular cast iron. Natural hydraulic pressure draws

contaminated groundwater through the cell, where solvents are remediated to meet the Environmental Protection Agency's primary drinking water standards. Groundwater flow through the treatment cell is induced by the natural hydraulic head difference between the cell and the Savannah River.

The first phase of the demonstration, completed in December 1997, showed that the current cell is capable of treating approximately 8 gallons per minute of TNX floodplain groundwater contaminated with greater than 200 ppb trichloroethylene solvent.

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## The SRS Environmental Bulletin

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